THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) There are no reports of unauthorized buildings and residential colonies on forest land in the immediate vicinity of National Parks and Sanctuaries. However, instances of damage caused by wild animals to human beings and vice versa, have come to the notice of the Central Government. While damage caused to wild animals is dealt with in accordance with the provisions of Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, there is provision of payment of ex-gratia in case of human death and compensation for injury suffered by human beings.

Vacant Posts in the Forest Department

1104. SHRIMATI SARLA MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of front line posts in the Department of Forest are lying in various States;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the lack of adequate strength of forest guards causes the large scale encroachment on forest land and increases poaching;

(d) if so, whether Government have initiated steps to lift the present ban on recruitments in this sector;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) The State-wise information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) to (f) Lack of required man power does have adverse impacts on protection of forests and wildlife including the prevention of poaching, encroachment etc. The problems have become more acute due to ban on recruitments imposed by various State Governments. Therefore, the Central Government has already urged all the State Governments to fill the vacancies of front line field staff by delegating powers for making appointments to the officials of the Wildlife Wing.

Division to Study Endangered Species

1105. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have already placed a special Division that would study and help in protecting endangered species in the country;

(b) if so, the roles defined for the functioning of this special Division;

(c) whether this division would also be involved directly in the fight against poaching;

(d) if so, to what extent and if not the reasons therefor; and

(e) if the answer to part (a) above be in the negative, whether it is a fact that there is a need for such a Division?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

(e) There is no need for a division at present because for protecting endangered species in the country, following steps have already been taken:

(1) *State level:*

(i) State level and District level coordination committees have been set up in several States to prevent poaching and illegal trade in wildlife.

(ii) State Wildlife Authorities carry out regular checking of the stocks of dealers of animal products and birds.

(2) *National level*

(i) Government of India has set up Regional and Sub-regional Offices for wildlife preservation in major export and trade centers of the country to prevent smuggling of wild animals and their products.

(ii) Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has been empowered under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 to apprehend and prosecute wildlife offenders. Anti poaching efforts are being coordinated with INTERPOL.

(iii) Financial and technical help is being extended to the States under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes, *viz.* Project Tiger, Project Elephant, Development of National Parks and Sanctuaries and Eco-development around Protected Areas for enhancing the capacity and infrastructure of the States for providing effective protection to wild animals. Financial assistance is, in particular, being provided for raising 'Strike Forces' and providing arms to the protection staff

for combating the organised poachers. Assistance is also provided for giving rewards to the informers for eliciting information about poachers and smugglers.

(iv) A Special Coordination and Enforcement Committee has been set up under the chairmanship of Secretary, Environment & Forests, Government of India, for control of poaching and illegal trade in wildlife.

(v) Export of wild animals and their derivatives is prohibited under EXIM policy.

(vi) Ministry of Home Affairs has written to all the State Governments to lend a helping hand to the field formations to curb poaching and illegal trade in wildlife.

(3) *International level*

(i) Government of India is a signatory to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) for control of illegal trade in wildlife items.

(ii) Bilateral agreements have been signed with Nepal and Republic of China for controlling trans-boundary illegal trade in wildlife.

(iii) A Global Tiger Forum of Tiger Range Countries has been created for addressing international issues related to Tiger Conservation.

Environmental Damage by Advertisements

1106. SHRI BHAGAT RAM MANHAR:
PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM:
SHRI RAJU PARMAR:
SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Supreme Court imposed penalty in the recent past on Pepsi, Coca Cola, Birla White Cement and other companies for causing damage to environment in Rohtang Pass, by way of painting advertisements on rocks; if so whether these companies have paid penalties;

(b) what are the contents of the Supreme Court order and the action taken by Government in this regard;